Change through recombination
Blending and analogy

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Abstract

Blending is generally seen as a marginal source of linguistic innovations in language change. However, the impact of blending is likely underestimated, because blends may occur under the guise of analogical extension. In such cases, blending is covert and cannot be detected synchronically in the innovative structure. In this paper, the relation between analogy and blending is analyzed. Next, the role of covert blending is demonstrated in two diachronic case studies. The first case study addresses the use of the English verbs *want* and *need* in the Passival Participle Construction (e.g. *you need your eyes testing*). The pattern could have analogically extended from perception verbs, as claimed by Visser (1963-73), but distributional, chronological and semantic evidence indicate that the extension happened through blending between two other constructions, the Passival Gerund Construction (*your eyes need testing*) and the Object Complement Construction (*you need your eyes tested*). The second case study deals with the development of the Dutch downtoner *allesbehalve* ('not at all'). It is shown that once *allesbehalve* had adopted the syntactic status of a downtoner it spread to new syntactic contexts. Since this brings *allesbehalve* in line with other downtoners, the process can be seen as an instance of analogical extension. Quantitative evidence, however, shows that the developing syntactic behaviour of the downtoner continues to be influenced by the syntax of its composing elements, *alles* ('everything') and *behalve* ('except'). Change is thus partly driven by blending between the downtoner and its own historical source. In both cases, apparent analogical extensions hide an underlying blend. These findings show that blending may be more pervasive than generally recognized, supplementing rule-based strategies for coining new utterances.

Keywords: analogy; complementation; downtoner; Dutch; English; gerund; participle; syntactic blending

1 Introduction

Blending is most familiar as a source of speech errors as in (1) (mixing up *terrible* and *horrible*), or as the source of conscious coinages as in (2) (combining *buffalo* and *beef*). It is also traditionally recognized as an occasional source of spontaneous language change, when non-intentional mix-ups make it into the linguistic repertoire of a larger community of speakers, as in (3) (combining *irrespective* and *regardless*).

(1) That's *torrible*! (quoted from Garrett 1980: 205)

(2) Basolo discusses cross breeding of buffalo and beef cattle to produce hybrid *beefalo*. (1974, OED s.v. *beefalo*)

(3) they were trying to cover up, manage the media so that they would look good, *irregardless* of how many lives we were losing over there. (1991, COCA)

The examples in (1)-(3) share a number of characteristics. First, in the examples, the expressions providing input to blending share a common formal element (/rəbl̩/ in (1); /bVf/ in (2); /rɪ/ in (3)). Second, the expressions involved are approximately synonymous (*terrible* and *horrible*, *irrespective* and *regardless*) or at least semantically related (*buffalo* and *beef*). Third, the way input expressions are segmented ignores at least one canonical boundary (in all three examples words are segmented at non-morphemic boundaries). These characteristics serve as easy diagnostics of blending and present persuasive evidence that the phenomenon exists. The occasional violation of morpheme structure is the primary indication that blending occurs, and it is thanks to the semantic and formal relatedness between a blend and other more conventional expressions that we can identify the input to blends, which in turn corroborates the blending analysis.

However, not all of these characteristics need to be strictly definitional and their prominence in discussions on blending may have obscured the actual impact of blending on language use and language change. Unmistakable blends as in (1)-(3) above present direct evidence of a blending mechanism, but they appear to be relatively rare, particularly as a source of change. It is telling that most historical linguistics textbooks mention blending only in connection to contaminations in word formation (often as a source of irregularities in sound change) (Jeffers & Lehiste 1979; Anttila 1989; Aitchison 1991; Lehmann 1992; McMahon 1994; Trask 1996; Sihler 1999; Crowley 2010), while some textbooks fail to mention blending altogether (Bynon 1977; Hale 2007), and only a few discuss blending in relation to syntactic change (Hock 1986; Croft 2000; Campbell 2004). It is further revealing that the changes caused by blending are described as "oddities" (Aitchison 1991: 177), "peripherally important" (Anttila 1989: 142) or "sporadic" (McMahon 1994: 75). Significantly, these appreciations of the relevance of blending to language change all pertain to immediately identifiable blends as in (1)-(3) above. However, recombining expressions on the basis of some shared element could be a common strategy for coining utterances, without necessarily producing output that can be easily distinguished from that produced by other, rule-based strategies. If so, it is conceivable that many blends remain undetected as long as they are to be recognized only by the criteria that apply to (1)-(3) above. That is, many blends could be covert.

The problem of covert blends – and its potential relevance – can be illustrated from the list of blends collected by Cohen (1987). Contrary to the historical linguistics textbooks surveyed above, Cohen maintains that "blending is a frequent occurrence in language" (1987: 2), and illustrates this point with over two thousand at-

tested examples. A number of these, however, could in principle have been arrived at through other mechanisms. For example, *caught out*, as in (4a-b), is treated by Cohen as a blend from *caught* and *found out*. However, *out* is a particle that productively attaches to verbs in English. In fact, *out* is regularly used with verbs to mark actions that bring someone or something out into the open. Next to *catch out*, there are numerous verb-particle combinations answering to roughly the same semantic pattern, including both highly frequent ones such as *point out* (5a) and uncommon ones like *spot out* (5b) or *nose out* (5c).

(4) a. If we were *caught out* ... (quoted from Cohen 1987).

b. There was a spurious book written in the second century called the Acts of Paul and Thecla. The author was a priest and when he was *caught out*, he claimed to have written the book "out of love for Paul." (2003, COCA)

(5) a. There are a lot of things which went wrong and these were *pointed out* by the report. (2000, COCA)

b. Another one of those bad boys will *spot out* how this peacock plume of a bejeweled woman stands two or so inches taller than she normally would (1992, COCA)

c. It was not until the eighteenth century, after hundreds of years of muddled controversy, that Immanuel Kant *nosed out* the fallacy. (1994, COCA)

In light of this, it is difficult to decide whether *catch out* in examples like (4) arose as a blend of *catch* and *find out* or through a semantically motivated analogical extension of a productive verb-particle pattern to a new verb. There is no reason to suppose *catch* would resist such an extension on syntactic grounds, since it already combines with other particles (6).

(6) I told myself that I mustn't get *caught up* in this absurd idea. (2011, COCA)

In all, then, Cohen's case that *catch out* in (4) is a blend is not very strong, but that is not because his blending analysis is implausible. The weakness of Cohen's analysis lies only in the fact that part of the evidence typically relied on for the identification of blends is missing: there is no canonical morpheme boundary violated in *catch out* and there is semantic but no formal overlap between *caught* and *found out*. Still, since there is no strong evidence to reject it, Cohen's analysis could be correct, but if so, the implication would be that blending is potentially indistinguishable from other strategies for coining new utterances.

This idea is to be developed further in this paper by demonstrating that blending-like phenomena can occur covertly, without the familiar tell-tale signs of blending. Because the blended expressions at issue are less synchronically unidentifiable as blends, the evidence that supports the involvement of blending in their production is qualitatively different. Specifically, the following presents two case studies on historical change in which chronological, distributional, semantic and quantitative evidence all point to the involvement of a mechanism akin to blending but operating under the guise of analogical extension. Both case studies relate to the domain of syntax, where blending has received least recognition, but cover different domains of grammar and come from different languages, thereby showing the same phenomenon at work in very different contexts. The first case study describes the development of a new complementation pattern with the English verbs *want* and *need* (Sec-

tion 3). The second case study describes the development of the minimizing downtoner *allesbehalve* ('not at all') in Dutch and its extension over a range of grammatical contexts (Section 4). Apart from supporting the role of covert blending effects in language change, the case studies suggest that blending and analogical extension can interact, with the former facilitating the latter. Before addressing the two case studies, however, the notions of analogy and blending need to be defined with some more precision (Section 2).

2 Blending vs. analogy

Both analogy and blending are ways of recombining linguistic expressions and both are sanctioned by similarity relations. In (7a), illustrating analogy, one of the regular patterns for forming comparative adjectives in English, *-er*-suffixation, has extended to the adjective *bad*. The similarity that motivates the extension is between *bad* and other adjectives that can enter the pattern of *-er*-suffixation, such as *long*, *fat* or *scary* etc., all of which denote gradable properties and most of which are monosyllabic. In (7b), illustrating blending, a doubly marked comparative is formed for *healthy*, thereby merging two established expressions, *healthier* and *more healthy*. In this case, the similarity that motivates recombination is in the formal and semantic overlap between the two established expressions.

(7) a. TV's bad businessmen have been getting *badder* each decade (1991, COCA)
b. the lava lamp bubbles that are at the bottom will show which (foods) are *more healthier* (2005, COCA)

The examples in (7a-b) also show where analogy and blending differ. Analogy operates by matching one expression to a schematic slot associated with another expression. The similarity is with other potential fillers of the same schematic slot. In constructional terms, a construction *x* joins the more extensive set of constructions *A* that can pattern with another construction *y*. In contrast, blending operates by matching two constructions *x* and *y* at a point of substantial overlap, with minimal schematization required and, as a result, no alignment to a set of similarly behaving expressions.

Figure 1 visualizes how analogy and blending could have operated to give rise to examples (7a-b) above. The shaded areas highlight the similarity-based matches between constructions that sanction the operation of either mechanism. The thick dashed lines highlight the paradigm that both feeds into and results from the schematization on which analogy depends. Note that the representation in Figure 1 is highly simplified. Constructions are represented as simple form-meaning pairings, without reference to other types of grammatical knowledge that may be constructionally encoded – e.g. distributional behaviour (cf. Fried & Östman 2004: 18-23). Even within this simplified representation, not all potentially relevant similarity relations are highlighted – e.g. the fact that most adjectives entering the *-er*-suffixation pattern are monosyllabic is ignored. Further, some decisions in representation are essentially arbitrary or in any case not at issue here – e.g. a schematic suffixation site might be assumed for *bad*. That said, Figure 1 shows the essential similarities and differences between analogy and blending as understood here. Whereas analogy in *badder* depends on schematic overlap, extending a regular pattern and adding a new member to a paradigm, blending in *more healthier* hinges only on syntagmatic overlap between (at least partially) substantial expressions and does not in principle extend a regular pattern.

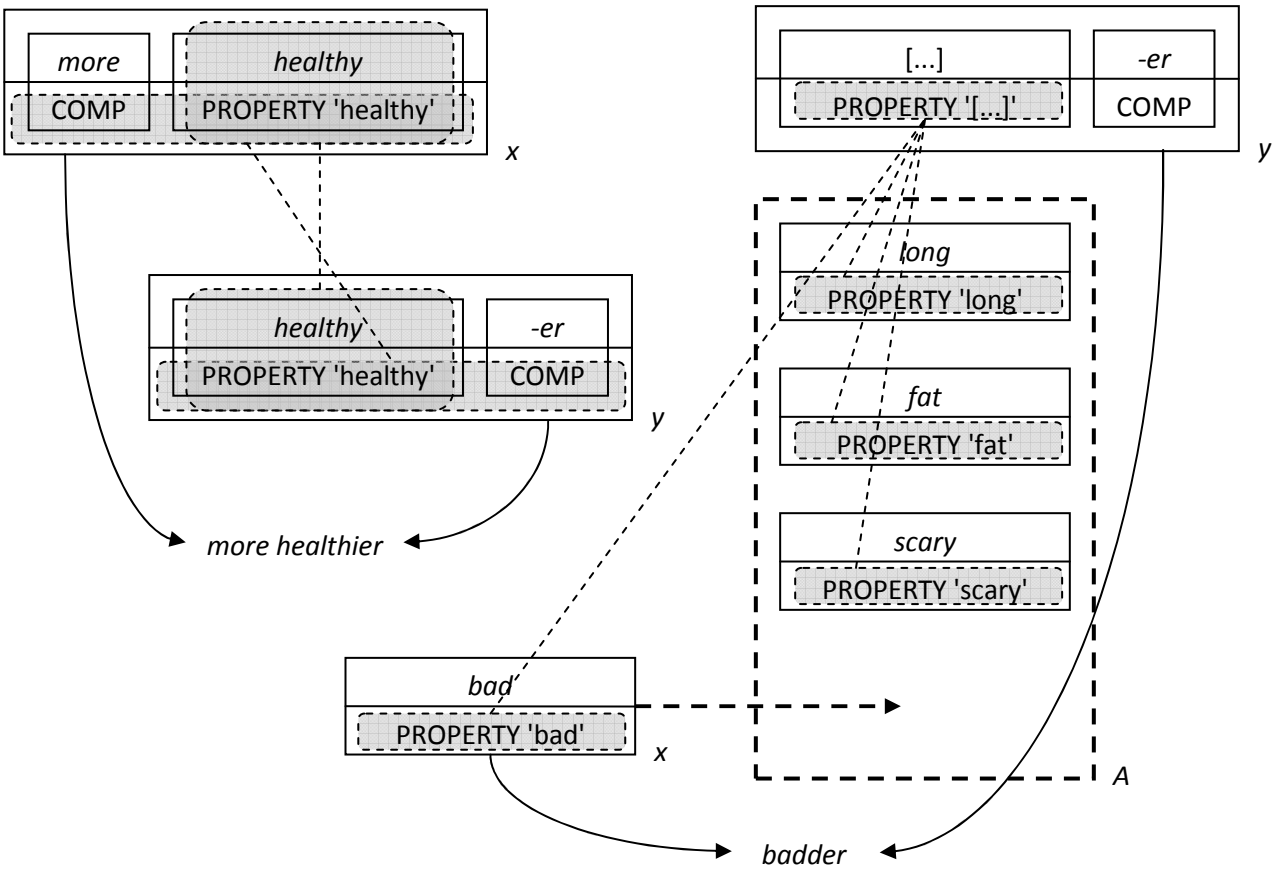

Figure 1. Blending vs. analogy in *more healthier* and *badder*.

Some remarks are in place here. First, there is a cline that connects blending to analogy and, conceivably, analogy to rules. As Langacker, in describing analogy, puts it:

> [T]he very process of analogizing induces the apprehension of an abstract commonality, at least as a fleeting occurrence. The distinction between rule and analogy then reduces to whether the operative schema has already achieved the status of a unit. This is at most a matter of timing and may well be one of degree. (Langacker 2000: 60)

Blending presupposes the lowest degree of schematization, namely recognition of partial substantial overlap between expressions (cf. Kemmer 2003). Analogy requires schematization over minimally entrenched combinations of expressions, establishing similarity-based paradigms. Rules are fully abstract generalizations that have grown to be operative independently of perceived similarities between the members of the paradigms they define. In [AUTHOR] (2012a) I have labelled blending effects as "local analogies", which is not unjustified given the cline-like relation between blending and analogy, but misses the point that those "local analogies" are akin to the blending phenomena known from speech errors or conscious word formations.

Second, although blending is sanctioned by minimal schematic overlap and thus appears to work with highly concrete representations, the process is by no means blind to the more abstract levels of structural repre-

sentation. Working from Cohen's (1987) collection of syntactic blends, Coppock (2006) shows that syntactic alignment between two constructions is a determinant of the likelihood of their being blended. Similar findings are reported for experimentally elicited idiom blends by Cutting & Bock (1997). In the same vein, Berg (1998: 153) shows that spontaneous word blends typically take their input from words belonging to the same part of speech (see also Fay 1981). This sensitivity to structure is relevant to the argument developed below where transfer of syntactic behaviour is presented as an aspect (and sign) of covert blending (see Section 4.2).

Third, it is sometimes assumed that blending results from competition between alternative formulations of approximately the same message (Garrett 1980; Fay 1981; Coppock 2010; see also Hock 1986: 190, 358). Although for many blends this seems plausible, the characterization of blending proposed here is not committed to this view. For instance, *much less meatier* in (8) could count as a blend between *be much meatier* and *be less meaty* (recombination being sanctioned by formal overlap in *meaty* and by semantic overlap in the comparative component of the expressions' meanings), but it is hard to see how the first input construction, *be much meatier*, could be a viable alternative formulation of the speaker's intended message.

(8) Soft-shelled [lobster] are easier to crack open, but can be much *less meatier*, whereas hard-shelled are crammed with meat, but you may have to resort to a hammer to get to it. (2008, COCA)

The problem disappears if competition is understood broadly enough, as involving all formulations linked by association that are being considered by speakers in production, regardless of whether they are appropriate to the message the speaker eventually chooses to deliver. This broader definition requires no near-synonymy between input expressions, and can apply to the blend in (8). It is also consistent with findings reported in Cutting & Bock (1997). Cutting & Bock observe spontaneous examples like (9), in which competition is not so much between alternative formulations of the same message as between alternative messages (presumably *straight as an arrow* and *flat as a pancake*).[1]

(9) The road to Chicago is *straight as a pancake*. (quoted from Cutting & Bock 1997: 57)

They also find that, under experimental conditions, idiom blends are more likely with idioms that are syntactically parallel but have different meanings than with idioms that are neither syntactically nor semantically similar – in other words, near-synonymy is not a necessary condition for blending. Further, while semantic similarity between idioms does increase the likelihood of blending, the same goes for literal semantic relations between an idiom and a phrase (e.g. *hold your tongue* and *grab your lip*). Cutting & Bock's findings, then, do not speak in favour of seeing blending as restricted to competing formulations of the same message. Tending to the same conclusion is Berg's (1998: 157) estimate that in erroneous word blends only "between half and two-thirds of the blending partners are meaning-related." The possible lack of near-synonymy between input expressions is relevant to the argument below (see Section 4.2).

Fourth, there is a hard-to-interpret relationship between mechanisms of change and sources of speech errors. Clearly, both blending and analogy can have outputs that are considered erroneous (e.g. *less meatier* in-

[1] Spontaneous word blends may similarly conflate not just different formulations but also different messages, as in *flustrated* from *flustered* and *frustrated* (Meg Laing p.c.).

stead of *less meaty*, or *badder* instead of *worse*), yet both can also have outputs that make it into the linguistic repertoire of large communities of speakers. There is a number of considerations to suggest that, particularly in the domain of blending and analogy, errors and innovations arise in more or less similar ways. Some degree of overlap appears to exist between errors and lasting innovations (Bybee & Slobin 1982).[2] Further, it is striking that compared to other speech errors blends are very unlikely to be corrected in actual usage (Berg 1992: 118) – again suggesting that they are not too far from acceptable formations. Finally, it may be that what counts as an error is often determined (negatively) by the intrinsic likelihood of its production and (positively) by the degree of entrenchment of the alternatives, implying that the difference between an error and a potentially lasting innovation is very much a matter of degree.[3] In light of these considerations, the present model assumes no fundamental difference between blending or analogy as sources of speech errors and as sources of spontaneous innovations. Note, though, that this assumption is not crucial to the main argument of this paper.

Finally, the above characterizations of blending and analogy allow us to pinpoint when the two processes become hard to tell apart. One situation in which the two phenomena lose distinctiveness is when blending produces an output that also happens to fit a regular pattern. It is that kind of situation to which the following two sections are devoted.

3 The complements of *want* and *need*

The first innovation to illustrate covert blending effects is the appearance of the pattern illustrated in (10), with examples drawn from the spoken component of the *British National Corpus* (BNC).

(10) a. Will you sort out er *what pull overs* you *want washing* tomorrow (BNC)
b. Look, no Richard! I don't *want things stuffing down that hole*. Put it in the bin. (BNC)
c. Perhaps the gas cooker's broken and they *need it mending* (BNC)
d. She *needs everything rearranging*. (BNC)

In what follows, Section 3.1 briefly outlines the pattern's essential characteristics and its relation to other constructions in the grammar from a synchronic point of view. Section 3.2 then turns to the historical development of the pattern. Section 3.3 discusses the respective role of blending and analogy.

3.1 *Synchronic characterization*

The pattern illustrated in (10) above consists of the matrix verbs *want* or *need*, combining with a direct-object-like noun phrase (*what pull overs*, *things*, etc.), which can be relativized or fronted (as in (10a)), and a participle-like clause formed on a verbal form in *-ing* (*washing*, *stuffing down that hole*, etc.), whose subject is unspecified and whose implicit object is controlled by the object of the matrix verb. The pattern in (10) is neither frequent

[2] Overlap also exists between errors and conscious coinages (Berg 1998; Kelly 1998), even though Gries (2004a, 2004b) also demonstrates a number of intriguing differences.
[3] Tellingly, the literature sometimes treats as errors what are clearly innovations. *Catch out* in (4) above is a case in point, being included by Coppock (2010) in her corpus of speech errors, but constituting a reasonably common pattern in present-day usage that is well-attested in the larger corpora of English.

nor marginal. A systematic survey of the BNC 10-million-word spoken component produces 40 instances with *want* and another 8 with *need*.[4]

What makes the pattern in (10) interesting is that it is hard to classify synchronically. It resembles the use of participial object complements with a variety of matrix verbs, as illustrated in (11), but the control relation between the direct object of the matrix verb and the participle clause is obviously different. Whereas in (10) above the higher clause object controls the participle clause object, it controls the participle clause subject in (11). Note that regular participial object complements as in (11) are attested with *want* and *need* as well, as shown in (12).

(11) a. I want to *get them enjoying* mathematics. (BNC)
b. The steering was rudimentary, but enough to *keep us travelling* bow-first downstream. (BNC)
c. He never saw his pursuer, though occasionally he *heard it snuffling* behind him. (BNC)

(12) a. No, I don't *want you touching* those snails. (BNC)
b. they're *the sort of women* we *need coming* into parliament (BNC)

To avoid confusion, I will refer to the pattern in (11) and (12) as instances of the Object Complement Construction, whereas the pattern in (10) above I will refer to as the Passival Participle Construction. The term 'passival' is chosen because the construction conveys a passive-like interpretation despite the absence of an actual passive marker. The term 'participial' is used because the *-ing*-form is not the head of a nominalized clause. Traditional English grammar distinguishes two clause types headed by *-ing*-forms: gerunds, which are nominalizations (e.g. *she clearly has moments when she regrets giving up her old life* (2002, COCA)) and present participles, which tend to alternate with past participles, adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases (e.g. *she saw the dinosaur standing at the edge of the forest, head down, sniffing the snow* (2010, COCA)). The distinction is not always clear-cut and confusion between the two clause types has increased over time – a trend to which the changes discussed here have likely, if modestly, contributed (for a more encompassing discussion, see [AUTHOR] 2010).

The Passival Participle Construction bears similarity to yet another pattern, which is illustrated in (13) and which will be referred to here as the Passival Gerund Construction. In Present-day English, the Passival Gerund Construction occurs with only five matrix verbs, including *want* and *need* – the others are *bear*, *deserve* and *require*.[5] It has a verb complement headed by a deverbal form in *-ing*, which can be modified by adjectives (e.g. *careful* in (13b)) and determiners (e.g. *no* in (13c)). The clearly nominal character of the complement justifies its classification as a type of gerund. Further, the complement has an implied object controlled by the subject of the matrix verb. It is this last characteristic, giving rise to a passive-like reading for the form in *-ing*, that is most conspicuously shared with the Passival Participle Construction.

(13) a. we need to get a whole load of ne er tiles cos the whole club *wants re-tiling* (BNC)
b. some kind of villain, who *needed careful watching*. (BNC)

[4] The search strings on which these counts are based are <want.*[v*]> or <need.*[v*]> followed by a form in <*ing> within four words.
[5] This set has been arrived at by checking the BNC for Passival Gerund Constructions with any of the verbs that have been found at some point in history to have occurred in the Passival Gerund Construction by Visser (1963-73) or [AUTHOR] (2012b).

c. I'm sure you *need no reminding* that during the past ten years, a new order has emerged

At the same time, there are some important differences. These include the fact that next to the *-ing*-form, the Passival Gerund Construction only has a subject; that its *-ing*-form is nominal; and that, when used with *want*, the matrix verb has a slightly different meaning – 'require, need' – instead of its usual volitional semantics.

3.2 *Historical development*

The similarities between the construction types outlined in Section 3.1 are historically relevant, as it is very likely that the Object Complement Construction and the Passival Gerund Construction influenced the emergence of the Passival Participle Construction. The following historical overview is based on data from the *Old Bailey Corpus* (OBC), the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (CLMETEV), the *Corpus of Early Modern English texts* (CEMET), the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) and the collected citations in Visser (1963-73).[6, 7]

The earliest attestations of the Passival Participle Construction with *want* appear in the second half of the eighteenth century, as shown in (14a-b). From then on, attestation is continuous, as shown by (14c-d) and (10) above. At no point does the pattern become frequent, though perhaps this is in part because the pattern is from the start associated with registers that are generally not well-represented in historical corpora – e.g. with the possible exception of (14c) (the source of which I could not check), all examples in (14) are from quoted speech.

(14) a. If ... you Messrs. Apothecary and Taylor *want your bills paying* (1759-67, quoted from Visser 1963-73: 2362)
b. he was to make some memorandum with respect to *some Dutch names* that he *wanted putting on the watches* (1788, OBC)
c. Those who *wanted a church consecrating*, or a meeting to be held. (1868, OED)
d. it's a pity you don't *want that cake cutting into*. (1908, CLMETEV)

The oldest instance with *need* in the data, given here as (15), dates from the early twentieth century.

(15) He did not *need the term explaining to him* (1925, quoted from Visser 1963-73: 2362)

The Passival Participle Construction occurred much earlier, however, with perception verbs, as in (16). The pattern is attested throughout the Modern period, as shown by Visser (1963-73: 2362). Judging from Visser's examples, the origin of the pattern lies in the sixteenth century, which is consistent with his hypothesis that it arose under the influence of passival progressives of the type *the house was building* (= 'being built'), which in turn may have arisen under the influence of passival gerunds ([AUTHOR] 2010).

[6] The search strings on which these counts are based are <want*> or <need*> followed by a form in <*ing> within four words.
[7] For broad periodization, I refer to the period 1100-1500 as Middle English, to the period 1500-1920 as Modern English (with a distinction between Early Modern English from 1500-1710 and Late Modern English from 1710-1920) and to the period from 1920 onwards as Present-day English.

(16) a. The other prysoners, *whom* we *see* yonder *ledyng to the dethe warde* (1523, quoted from Visser 1963-73: 2362).
b. When he *found ... the Furniture ... packing away*, he was enraged (1730, quoted from Visser 1963-73: 2362).
c. Annie seem'd to *hear her own death-scaffold raising* (1864, quoted from Visser 1963-73: 2362)

The Passival Gerund Construction appears with *need* near the end of the fourteenth century, and with *want* in the second half of the sixteenth ([AUTHOR] 2008), as shown in (17).

(17) a. Everich ȝere þe spraie [of a vine] *nedeþ kuttinge and paringe*. (a1398, quoted from [AUTHOR] 2012b: [TO BE SUPPLIED])
b. It was but rough hewen by one of the prentises, and *wanted sum polishing by the forman* (1574, quoted from [AUTHOR] 2012b: [TO BE SUPPLIED])

Note that historical data show the Passival Gerund Construction to have been more productive in earlier stages of the language than it is today. In a controlled corpus sample of Early and Late Modern English, [AUTHOR] (2012b: [TO BE SUPPLIED]) finds passival gerunds also with *decline*, *escape*, *fear* and *prevent*, none of which occur in the Passival Gerund Construction today. Visser (1963-73: 1886-7) additionally lists examples with *abide*, *avoid*, *await*, *desire*, *lack*, *merit*, *stand* and *suffer*. In Early Modern English, passival gerunds are even attested outside verb complementation contexts, as shown in (18).

(18) a. and yet I was almoste an hundred miles hence, where [...] I coulde haue withdrawen my selfe from *catching*. (1554, PPCEME)
b. the maister of the pudding cart before named, would let the filthines of the butcherie tarie so long there vntill it stanke so sore, [...] for lacke of *carying* out betime, that [...] all the neighbours about were grieuouslye vexed (1568, PPCEME)

The higher incidence of passival gerunds in earlier stages reflects the fact that the gerund in the Modern period was still less strongly associated with active voice. In this respect, passival gerunds show an interpretative behaviour typical of other action nominals, which can invite passive or active interpretations depending on the context, as illustrated by (19a-b) respectively.

(19) a. the exile [...] to which he had fled from fear of *imprisonment* (BNC)
b. Computone Corp [...] has fired its board and all of its officers for financial *mismanagement* (BNC)

Because passive interpretations are context-dependent, it is unsurprising that passival gerunds typically appear in lexico-grammatical contexts that trigger passive readings in other action nominals as well (usually, these contexts contain predicates that select subjects lacking in agentive qualities). For example, the earliest attested passival gerunds with *want* already alternated with other passival action nominals ([AUTHOR] 2012b: [TO BE SUPPLIED]), as shown in (20).

(20) neither *wanted* that thing great *suspicion*. (1560, OED)

This largely accounts for the distribution of the Passival Gerund Construction in the Modern period. The slightly later appearance of the construction with *want*, as compared to *need*, is due to the fact that *want* only became compatible with passival complements after independent changes in its semantics. The gradual decline of the Passival Gerund Construction is probably linked to the great success of active clausal gerunds, which tend to replace passival gerunds, especially in the Late Modern period ([AUTHOR] 2012b).

The Object Complement Construction is well-attested by the time of the Early Modern period (Visser 1963-73: 2339-2360), as illustrated in (21).

(21) a. There's some among you haue *beheld me fighting* (1607-8, CEMET)
b. Others there are Who ... *keep* yet *their hearts attending on themselves* (1604, Visser 1963-73: 2355)

In the most general terms, the Object Complement Construction can be characterized as consisting of a verb, subject and object, and an object complement. Semantically, the object complement assigns a property to the object, and it is this predicative-like relation to which the action of the matrix verb applies. For example, the subject of (21a) does not just behold the object *me* but beholds the object in the act of *fighting*.

However, it is plausible that the construction actually subsumes a much more complicated network of constructions. On the one hand, some likely sub-patterns can be discerned in terms of the semantic class of the matrix verb. The clearest semantic clusters include the uses with perception verbs (e.g. *see*, *hear*, *find*, *behold*, etc.) and with causative verbs (e.g. *send*, *set*, *keep* and later *start*, *have*, *get* etc.). On the other hand, there is variation in the type of object complement, which can be a present participle, but also a past participle, an adjective phrase or a prepositional phrase. The examples in (22) illustrate the use of past participles in the Object Complement Construction.

(22) a. as it is a heart-breaking to see a handsome man loose-Wiu'd, so it is a deadly sorrow, to *beholde a foule Knaue vncuckolded* (1606-7, CEMET)
b. we care not to *keep truth separated from truth* (1644, CEMET)

Want and *need* entered the Object Complement Construction at different times. *Want* is first attested in the Object Complement Construction halfway the eighteenth century, as shown by the examples in (23). For *need*, first attestations in the Object Complement Construction date from the beginning of the twentieth century, as shown in (24).[8]

(23) a. I told him that they *wanted Sturges away* (1740, OBC)
b. [he] called for a pint of beer, and *wanted a steak broiled*, which was done. (1744, OBC)
(24) a. Thither, then, might have gone almost any young traveler who *needed a letter of credit cashed*, or *a bill changed after the fashion of the passing goldsmiths*. (1902, CEN)

[8] On checking its source, the example from 1848 quoted in Visser (1963-73: 2394) turned out to be from 1948.

b. She said I *needed a heavy hand over me*--and the shackles *on my wrists*. (1913, CEN)

In both cases, the Object Complement Construction may have become available through ambiguous examples, typically with a prepositional phrase that is either coindexed to the subject of *want* or *need* or to its object, as in (25).

(25) a. word was brought me, that a young Man [...] *wanted me at my Shop*. (1732, OBC)
b. and, of course, your work will soon *need you back again at Winchester* (1885, OBC)

3.3 *Analogy or blending?*

Given that the Passival Participle Construction is attested with perception verbs as early as the sixteenth century (cf. (16) above), the easiest explanation of its subsequent appearance with *want* and then with *need* is in terms of analogical extension – which is the explanation favoured by Visser (1963-73: 2361). However, the extension could also have resulted from a covert blend involving the verb *want* in the Object Complement Construction and the Passival Participle Construction and later a similar blend for the verb *need*. Figure 2 shows one way in which the blend could have operated (based on (10a) above).[9] There are various indications supporting the role of blending.

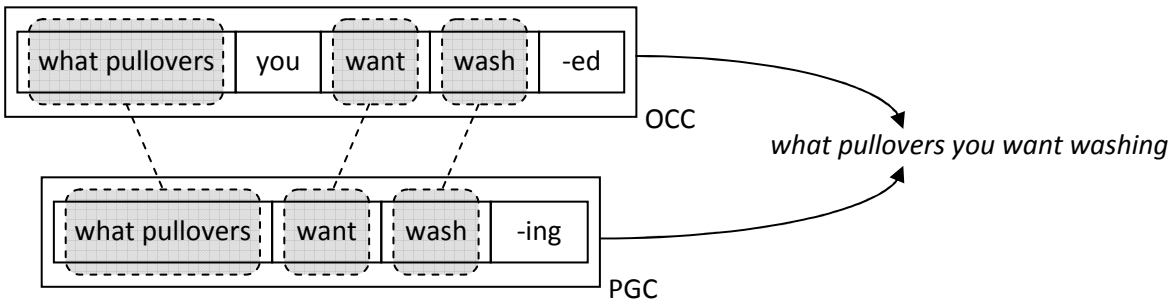

Figure 2. Blend of the Object Complement Construction (OCC) and Passival Gerund Construction (PGC) with *want*.

First, the extension of the Passival Participle Construction outside the realm of perception verbs happens precisely at the intersection of two distributions, that of the Passival Gerund Construction and that of the Object Complement Construction. Next to *want* and *need*, there is a handful of verbs that occur in the Passival Gerund Construction, but none of them occurs in the Object Complement Construction. In the same vein, next to *want*

[9] I have chosen an example where the object (*what pullovers*) is fronted, because in this context the Object Complement Construction and the Passival Gerund Construction have largely matching word order and so show greatest similarity. Whether this is the context that historically gave rise to the Passival Participle Construction cannot be ascertained from the data, but the possibility is mildly supported by early attestations of examples with fronted or relativized object (cf. (14b) above) and by the remarkable prevalence of such examples in the Present-Day BNC data (17 out of 48 examples of the Passival Participle Construction have a fronted or relativized object, against 4 out of 89 examples of the Object Complement Construction with *want* and *need* – the difference is significant at $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed), using a Fisher Exact test).

and *need*, there is a range of verbs (in addition to the perception verbs) that occur in the Object Complement Construction but not in the Passival Gerund Construction. Of all these verbs it is precisely *want* and *need* to which the Passival Participle Construction extends. This supports the idea that the appearance of the Passival Participle Construction with *want* and *need* depended on the presence of both the Passival Gerund Construction and the Object Complement Construction with the same verbs.

Second, the distributional evidence is supported by the chronology of first appearances. Figure 3 gives a timeline of the appearance of *want* and *need* in the various constructions, based on the examples given earlier. For the date of appearance in the Object Complement Construction I have taken the first attestation with a past participle object complement. It is particularly striking to see the close consecution between the appearance of the Object Complement Construction and the first instances of the Passival Participle Construction – the more so as the same close sequence of events is repeated for *need* about 150 years after it occurred for *want*.

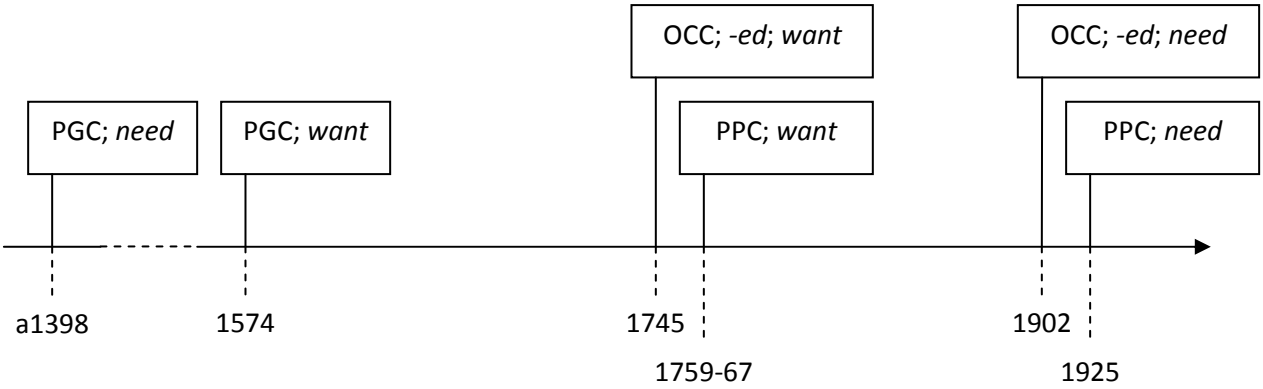

Figure 3. First attestations of the Passival Gerund Construction (PGC), Object Complement Construction (OCC) and Passival Participle Construction (PPC) with *want* and *need*.

Third, there is a minor qualitative difference between the passival participles with *want* and *need*, and the ones found with perception verbs. Whereas the passival participles with perception verbs are progressive in meaning (cf. (16)), just like their active counterparts (Dixon 2005: 271; Egan 2008: 145-151; Gisborne 2010: 195-7), this is not so for the passival participles with *want* and *need* (cf. (10), (14)-(15) above), which are perfective.[10] Perfective meaning could have been transferred, however, from the Passival Gerund Construction (cf. (13), (17) above) and/or the Object Complement Construction with past participle (cf. (23b), (24a)).

One question the blending account raises is why the blend takes the specific form it does. That is, why does blending of the Passival Gerund Construction (*what pullovers want washing*) and the Object Complement Construction (*what pullovers do you want washed*) result in an *-ing*-form substituting for the past participle in the Object Complement Construction (*what pullovers do you want washing*), rather than in the logically possible alternative that has a past participle substituting for the *-ing*-form in the Passival Gerund Construction (*what pullovers want washed*)? In fact, while it is unattested in the data used for this paper, the alternative blend is reported to occur as a dialectal variant in Ireland, Scotland, the Midland area of the United States and Canada (Frazer et al. 1996; Murray & Simon 1999, 2002). If the pattern was imported in North America by European

[10] Perfective meaning is not imposed by the semantics of the matrix verbs. *Want* and *need* are compatible with active present participles with progressive meaning, as in (12a-b) above.

immigrants, as Murray & Simon (2002) suspect, it must have been a Late Modern English feature. Since the relevant historical data are lacking, however, there is no checking whether its emergence parallels the development through blending presented here for the Passival Participle Construction.[11]

Returning to the latter, however, it is clear that the distribution of the various related constructions, the chronology of their appearance, and their semantic similarities all lend support to the idea that the Passival Participle Construction with *want* and *need* has arisen as a blend between the Passival Gerund Construction and the Object Complement Construction. While not flatly contradicted by the facts, an account in terms of analogical extension cannot explain the distributional constraints on the extended use of the Passival Participle Construction, nor the timing of its appearance, nor perhaps the finer details of its semantics. In this light, it is plausible that what looks like analogical extension is really, or also, a covert blend.

4 The extension of *allesbehalve*

In Present-Day Dutch, *allesbehalve* functions as an adverbial downtoner meaning 'far from, not at all'. The term 'downtoner', adopted from Quirk et al. (1985: 601), refers to adverb-like items that lower the force of the lexical item in their scope. Like most downtoners, *allesbehalve* can have scope over different phrase types, including (among others) noun phrases, adjective phrases and verb phrases, as in (26a-c) respectively.

(26) a. 't Kakelend Kippen-museum is *allesbehalve een museum*. (Google)[12]
is not.at.all a museum
'The Cackling Chicken Museum is not a museum at all.'

b. het publiek slikte tien songs lang de *allesbehalve verfijnde* hutsepot die het sympathieke koppel opdiende. (Google)[13]
the not.at.all refined mishmash
'Ten songs long the audience swallowed the far from refined mishmash that the likeable twosome served.'

c. waarbij ik *allesbehalve wil suggereren* dat een overval op een jonger iemand een mindere misdaad is. (Google)[14]
I not.at.all wish to.suggest that

[11] The synchronic evidence gives tantalizing hints, though. Some facts appear to go against the idea that the past participle pattern emerged through blending between the Passival Gerund Construction and the Object Complement Construction. Murray & Simon (1999) observe that speakers who accept the *want* + past participle pattern tend to reject *want* with passival gerund and vice versa (but the preference of one variant over the other may of course be a later development). They also observe that the past participle pattern is marginally attested with *like* (but so is the Passival Gerund Construction, albeit equally marginally). There is also some evidence to support a blending account. For instance, when used with past participle *want* tends to preserve the meaning 'lack', echoing its behaviour in the Passival Gerund Construction. Moreover, the past participle following *want* is subject to a range of syntactic and semantic restrictions (Murray & Simon 1996) that are likewise reminiscent of those found in the Passival Gerund Construction.

[12] http://www.vlaanderen-vakantieland.be/wat-te-doen/bezoek-en-beleef/Rondleidingen/-t-kakelend-kippenmuseum-938591.jsp (last accessed 3 July 2012)

[13] http://www.musiczine.net/nl/review-concerts/yo-la-tengo/yo-la-tengo-kwarteeuw-klasse/ (last accessed 3 July 2012)

[14] http://www.omroepbrabant.nl/?news/144180652/Bejaarde+man+overvallen+en+mishandeld.aspx (last accessed 3 July 2012)

'by which I absolutely do not wish to suggest that an assault on a younger person is less of a crime.'

To show how the history of *allesbehalve* testifies to the role of covert blending in language change, the following sections sketch the historical origins of the pattern in late eighteenth-century Dutch (Section 4.1) and then address the interaction between analogy and blending in its subsequent development (Section 4.2).

The discussion presented here of the development of *allesbehalve* is based on data drawn from the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (WNT) and the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Historische Kranten* (KBHK). The former source is a large historical dictionary whose quotation database can be searched as a corpus. The latter consists of a vast online historical newspaper archive.[15]

4.1 *The emergence of* allesbehalve

Allesbehalve can be traced back to a combination of the pronominal universal quantifier *alles* ('all, everything') and the preposition *behalve* ('except'). Remarkably, although both *alles* and *behalve* are well-attested items, they are rarely used in immediate consecution prior to the time they appear in the form of the downtoner *allesbehalve* – (27) is one of the few examples, and note that at this point the combination clearly maintains its compositional meaning 'everything except'.

(27) Voorleden Donderdag is de zaak der Dissidenten in de gem. Vergadering in overweeging genoomen. De Oostenryksche en Russische Gezanten hebben by die Gelegenheit sterk voor dezelven gepleit [...]. En men denkt dat de Dissidenten *alles* *behalven*
the Dissidents everything except
zitting *in* *den* *Seenaat* *en* *het* *Ministerie* verkrygen zullen.
representation in the Senate and the Ministry obtain will
(1775, KBHK)
'Last Thursday the case of the Dissidents has been considered in the General Assembly. The Austrian and Russian delegates have on that occasion pled strongly in their favour. And it is believed that the Dissidents will obtain everything except representation in the Senate and Ministry.'

In fact, early bridging contexts that allow multiple semantic and syntactic interpretations appear to be effectively absent in the data. The first candidate for a bridging context – in which *allesbehalve* can be interpreted as 'not at all, far from' but has potentially ambiguous syntax – is (28a). However, the syntactic shift from a combination of quantifier and preposition to an adverbial downtoner is unambiguously realized at exactly the same time in (28b), in which *allesbehalve* follows a determiner and modifies an attributive adjective, in violation of both the original pronominal status of *alles* and the prepositional status of *behalve*. Following (28b), syntactically unambiguous downtoner uses are attested continuously. Surprisingly, then, examples (28a-b), not only date the emergence of

[15] The search strings used were <alles behalven>, <allesbehalven>, <alles behalve> and <allesbehalve>, covering the item's variant spellings. For the KBHK, note that the quality of texts converted from scanned images is often poor, so searches may have missed relevant instances. The spelling of examples from the KBHK in the running text below has been based on the pdf versions of scanned articles.

the downtoner *allesbehalve* to the end of the eighteenth century,[16] but also imply that the changes in meaning and syntax that gave rise to the downtoner happened simultaneously and quite suddenly.

(28) a. de meesten Leden van dat Corps zyn *alles, behalven onverschillige, vastende,*
are everything except quiescent fasting
biddende en z gtende [sic] *Broeders*! (1787, KBHK)
praying and [unclear] monks
'Most members of that corps are far from quiescent, fasting, praying and [unclear] monks!'

b. latende voor het overige alle Welmeenende beoordeelen, wat men van dien *alles*
that everything
behalven geestigen, maar logenachtigen Briefschryver te denken heeft. (1787, KBHK)
except intelligent but mendacious letter-writer
'leaving it further for all the benevolent to judge what is to be thought of that far from intelligent but mendacious letter-writer.'

4.2 *Distributional change and blending*

Following its sudden appearance as what looks like a full-fledged downtoner, *allesbehalve* did undergo subsequent distributional changes as it aligned fully to the expected syntactic behaviour of a downtoner. In this respect at least *allesbehalve* is reminiscent of items that undergo a syntactic change and concomitant distributional changes (Harris & Campbell 1995; Hopper & Traugott 2003). Since the distributional changes reflect the general behaviour of the syntactic class to which the new item belongs, they can be thought of as analogical extensions. As is clear from the examples above, this also happened to *allesbehalve*, which acquired the behaviour of other downtoners (such as *nogal* 'rather', *een beetje* 'a bit', *verre van* 'far from', etc.) in combining with a range of different phrase types (see (26a-c) and (28b) above). On the whole, this process bears out a well-established grammatical regularity, with *allesbehalve* growing into an increasingly typical member of the downtoner paradigm. When looked at more closely, however, the way the process unfolds is found to be influenced by subtle blending effects.

To see this, the shifting distribution of *allesbehalve* over different syntactic contexts must be examined. Consider, for a start, the use of *allesbehalve* with adjectives and nouns as it develops over time. Figure 4 compares across three historical subperiods the proportions of *allesbehalve* used with scope over predicative noun phrases, predicative adjective phrases and attributive adjective phrases, as in (29a-c) respectively.[17]

[16] Note that the coalesced spelling for *allesbehalve* is a later development. Judging by the WNT, it first appears halfway the nineteenth century, as shown in *Een allesbehalve opbeurend bericht had hem niet weinig ontstemd* (1850, WNT) ('A far from cheering message had considerably disgruntled him.'). The coalesced spelling never becomes fully systematic in the data.

[17] For the period 1800-1829, when *allesbehalve* is still very infrequent, counts are based on the full available data set, drawn from the KBHK and the WNT. By contrast, for both the period 1830-1839 and the period 1880-1889, a 150-hit sample was taken from the hits for <alles behalve> (which is the most common spelling) in the KBHK, and then supplemented with the data for <allesbehalve> and <alles behalven> in the KBHK, plus all of the relevant examples from the WNT.

(29) a. Hoewel ik *alles behalven een spion van myne buuren* was, heb ik
Although I everything except a spy of my neighbours was
dikwyls alles afgeluisterd en afgekeeken. (1789, WNT)
'Although I was absolutely not a spy of my neighbours, I have often eavesdropped and pried on everything.'

b. op den overtocht, door een kanonschot ontwaakt te worden [...] is
on the journey by a canon-shot woken to be is
alles behalve aangenaam (1808, WNT)
everything except pleasant
'Being woken on the journey by a canon-shot is not pleasant at all.'

c. doch dergelijke bij ons *alles behalve buitengewone* gebeurtenissen, achten
such with us everything except unusual events
wij geene bijzondere vermelding waardig. (1829, KBHK)
'Yet such with us far from unusual events we do not consider worth any special mentioning.'

The periods have been chosen to reflect the early use of *allesbehalve* in the first decades of the nineteenth century (1800-29; 1830-39) and its use half a century later (1880-89). As can be expected of a new grammatical item, the overall frequency of *allesbehalve* underwent a strong increase over this period.[18] As Figure 4 shows, however, the increase was not equally-paced in all environments. Most clearly, *allesbehalve* with scope over attributive adjective phrases, though acceptable from the start (see also (28b) above), did not develop in the same pace as *allesbehalve* with predicative adjective phrases, being comparatively rare in the early decades of the nineteenth century and catching up during the latter half of the century. Another way of stating this is by saying that there is an early advantage for *allesbehalve* when it is used with predicative adjectives (the difference between attributive and predicative adjective contexts between the second and third subperiods is significant at $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed), using a Fisher's exact test). The relation between *allesbehalve* and predicative noun phrases is somewhat harder to interpret. The combination of the two is relatively infrequent, but downtoners in general combine much less commonly with nouns, which are an atypical target for scaling devices, especially compared to adjectives. In that light, it can be generalized from Figure 4 that the use of *allesbehalve* initially fares comparatively better with predicative phrases, including both noun and adjective phrases, than with attributive phrases.

[18] Because neither for the WNT nor for the KBHK an exact corpus size is known, it is difficult to compare precise frequencies across periods. For the KBHK data, however, occurrences per 1,000 newspaper articles can be calculated. Using this as a proxy and taking the joint absolute frequencies for the different spellings as input, a continuous increase is found for *allesbehalve* throughout the nineteenth century, from approximately 3 instances per 1,000 articles in the 1800s and 1810s, to 8 in the 1820s, 23 in the 1830s and 123 in the 1880s.

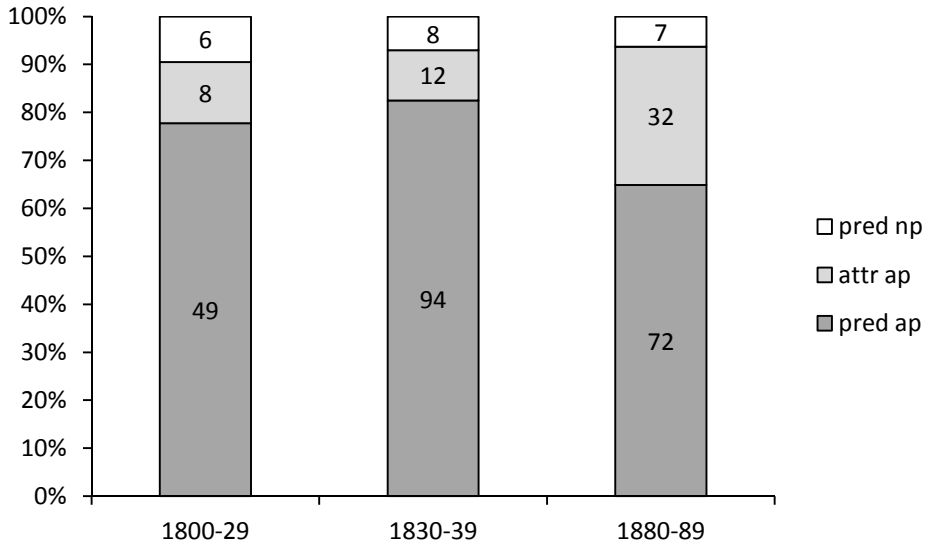

Figure 4. The use of *allesbehalve* with scope over predicative noun phrases, attributive adjective phrases and predicative adjective phrases in the KBHK and WNT.

Another difference in developmental pace is found in the domain of verb phrases. Although the use of *allesbehalve* with verb phrases again begins to appear immediately following the emergence of *allesbehalve* as a downtoner at the end of the eighteenth century, it is initially biased to transitive verbs where *allesbehalve* appears preceding noun phrase objects, as illustrated in the examples in (30a-b). In contrast, examples in which *allesbehalve* precedes a prepositional phrase or the verb itself, as in (31a-b), though not impossible, are initially avoided.

(30) a. Polen schynt met eenig onweer gedreigd te worden: de Hoven van Weenen, Petersburgh en Berlyn doen deszelfs grenzen door trouppen naderen. Dit *heeft dus alles, behalven*
this has therefore everything except
den schyn van eenen aannaderende vrede! (1790, KBHK)
the appearance of an approaching peace
'Poland seems to be threatened by a storm: the courts of Vienna, Petersburg and Berlin are ordering troupes to approach its borders. This then does not at all have the appearance of an approaching peace!'

b. De ongewapende jongelieden, *alles behalve zulk eenen aanval verwachtende*,
the unarmed young.men anything except such an attack expecting
vloden van rondsom, doch zij vonden het hek gesloten (1825, KBHK)
fled back but they found the fence closed
'The unarmed young men, far from expecting such an attack, fled back, but found the fence closed.'

(31) a. Intusschen kunnen wij niet ontveinzen, dat het er thans nog *alles*
that it PT presently still everything
behalve naar een' algemeenen vrede uitziet. (1828, KBHK)
except to a general peace looks

'In the meantime we cannot deny that things still do not look at all like a general peace.'

b. kreeten die zich naar alle kanten henen verspreidden, maar die,
rumours that REFL in all directions toward spread but which
gelukkiger wijze, later allerwege *zich* *alles* *behalve* *bevestigden*
happy fashion later in.all.directions REFL everything except confirmed
(1829, KBHK)
'rumours that spread in all directions but which, happily, later did not come true at all anywhere'

Figure 5 demonstrates this initial bias and its disappearance in the course of the nineteenth century (the difference between the first and third subperiods is statistically significant at $p < 0.025$ (two-tailed), using a Fisher's exact test).[19]

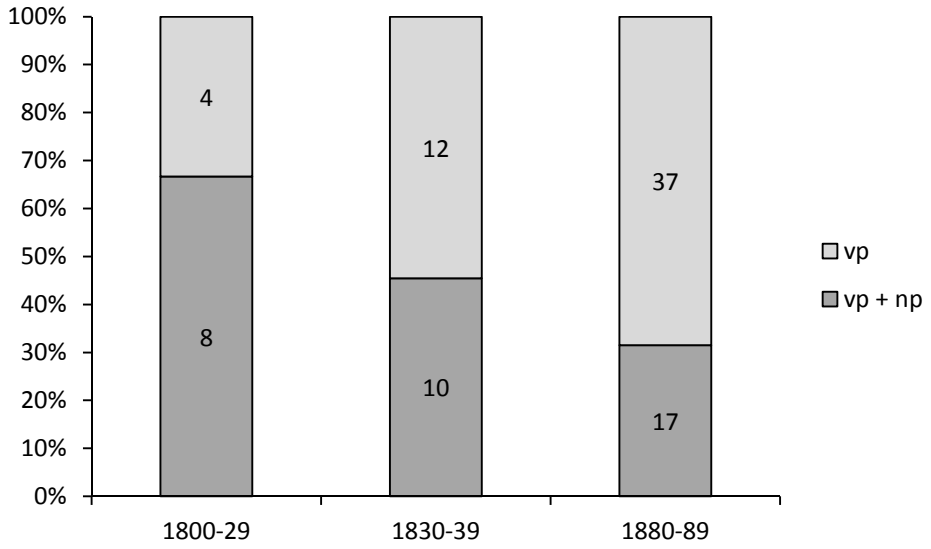

Figure 5. The use of *allesbehalve* with scope over verb phrases with and without internal noun phrase in the KBHK and WNT.

The two tendencies observed in Figures 4 and 5 have a common denominator. Although the meaning and syntactic status of *allesbehalve* had already been established by the end of the eighteenth century (see above), the downtoner initially thrives best in contexts that are compatible with the homonymous sequence of pronominal quantifier and preposition. That is, *alles*, as a pronominal quantifier, can readily fill the subject-complement slot dependent on copular *zijn* ('be') or the direct object slot dependent on any transitive verb, while *behalve*, as a preposition, would typically introduce a noun phrase.[20] Now these are also the syntactic roles *alles* and *behalve*

[19] Because the combination of *allesbehalve* with verb phrases is less common, the samples used here are, where possible, larger than the ones for Figure 4. For the periods 1800-1829 and 1830-39 counts are based on the full available data set, drawn from the KBHK and the WNT. For the period 1880-89 a 250-hit sample was taken from the hits for <alles behalve> in the KBHK, to which were added the data for <allesbehalve> and <alles behalven> in the KBHK, as well as all of the relevant examples from the WNT.

[20] Note, though, that the original syntactic behaviour of *behalve* is less constrained than that of most prepositions. In eighteenth-century Dutch it is at least occasionally found with prepositional phrases (e.g. *Zy vieren alle hun gewoone Feesten, en zyn, volkomen, Jesuiten,* behalven *in hun gewaad* 'They celebrate all their usual holidays

appear to be mimicking in the kinds of context *allesbehalve* initially favours. When modifying a predicative phrase, *alles* can pass for the nominal head of a subject-complement. When preceding the direct object of a transitive verb, *alles* can pass for the nominal head and *behalve* as a preposition introducing a postmodifier to *alles*. By contrast, when it is used with attributive adjective phrases or intransitive verb phrases, *allesbehalve* cannot exploit the syntax of its composing elements. Essentially, the favouring contexts are reminiscent of syntactic bridging contexts, except that they are as it were backformed, their appearance actually postdating the first evidence that *allesbehalve* is a downtoner (cf. Section 4.1 above).

The ambivalent character of the favouring contexts is confirmed by the fact that they resist syntactic operations that would unambiguously show *alles* and *behalve* still to function as independent elements. Dutch allows exbraciation of prepositional phrases, whereby (among other things) a noun phrase can be separated by the finite verb from its prepositional postmodifier. When exbraciation applies to sequences of *alles* and *behalve*, the effect is typically a literal reading, in which any shade of downtoner meaning is lost, as in (32) (or (27) above). This implies that the downtoner meaning in examples like (29) and (30) above is not merely an implicature, because if so the meaning ought to be insensitive to the syntactic operation.

(32) Plantation House en hare onderhorigheden leveren een bewys op wat
Plantation House and its branches provide a proof up what
de konst, op eene plaats alwaar de natuur alles geweigerd heeft,
the art in a place where the nature everything refused has
behalve zware nevels, doen kan. (1816, KBHK)
except heavy mists do can
'Plantation House and its branches provide evidence of what art can do in a place where nature has refused everything except heavy mists.'

Note further that in the one attested example, given in (33), where agreement can disambiguate the syntax of *allesbehalve*, it evidences syntactic downtoner status (the complement *dat*-clause would have had singular *was* if *alles* had been a nominal head).

(33) het antwoord, dat Generaal Diebitsch op deze boodschap gezonden heeft, schijnt den Pacha overtuigd te hebben, dat *hier alles behalve lauweren te plukken waren*
that here everything except laurels to win were.PL
(1829, KBHK)
'The answer that General Diebitsch sent to this message seems to have convinced the Pasha that there were absolutely no laurels to be won here.'

The available syntactic evidence thus supports the idea that the contexts initially favouring downtoner usage merely mimic the original syntax of *alles* and *behalve*.

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and are completely Jesuits, except in their dress.' (1777, KBHK)). This openness to other phrase types than noun phrases may be due to the fact that *behalve* developed from an adverbial prepositional phrase meaning 'to the side' (WNT s.v. *behalve*). In that light, the tendencies seen in Figures 4 and 5 may be primarily determined by the original syntax of *alles*.

This makes the findings paradoxical. On the one hand, the introduction of *allesbehalve* as a downtoner meaning 'far from, not at all', sets off an extension process by which *allesbehalve* comes to behave analogously to other downtoners, growing in frequency in a range of new syntactic contexts. On the other hand, in the course of this process *allesbehalve* does not blindly embrace downtoner syntax. Especially in the early stages of its extension to new syntactic contexts, it repeatedly exploits the syntactic potential of its composing elements. The paradox can be resolved if it is assumed that analogical extension is partly fuelled by blending between the downtoner and the homonymous sequence of pronominal quantifier and preposition, such that the downtoner *allesbehalve* initially favours contexts that syntactically resemble the pronominal quantifier behaviour of *alles* and/or the prepositional reading of *behalve*, but adopt the semantics of the downtoner. Blending thus facilitates analogical extension, alleviating the tension between a new item's syntactic status and its expected distribution.

This alleviating effect of blending supports Brenier & Michaelis' (2005) claim that syntactic blends can be exploited as "optimization strategies" when syntactic and/or functional constraints impose competing demands on usage. Since some degree of tension between syntax and function is particularly characteristic of language change, it may be expected that the way *allesbehalve* developed is not exceptional. Indeed, similar blending effects have been observed for other changes, both in the domain of downtoners, and in other domains of grammar ([AUTHOR] 2010a, 2010b, 2012a; [AUTHOR & OTHER] forthc.). For example, the English downtoner *far from* initially favours postnominal adjectives (*a prejudice still far from extinct* (1831, COHA)) over prenominal adjectives (*a still far from extinct prejudice*), presumably because the former positioning is less at odds with the syntax of its composing elements ([AUTHOR] 2012a). Although these effects are similarity-based, in many cases there is no productive rule involved, only an exchange of behavioural features on the basis of substantial overlap. The same applies to the present case. *Allesbehalve* and the compositional sequence of *alles* and *behalve* are not members of the same paradigm, but their formal identity gives the former a selectional advantage wherever it can draw on support from the latter. Presumably, activation of the downtoner *allesbehalve* is just a little faster in contexts that can also accommodate the associated forms *alles* and *behalve*, giving it a slight advantage, detectable in frequency differences as in Figures 4 and 5 above. As the downtoner becomes more frequent, the effect disappears or ceases to be noticeable.

5 Conclusions

In both the above case studies syntactic blending occurs under the cover of analogical extension – or analogical extension occurs with the support of an underlying blend. Because the outcome of the process answers to an established and schematic regularity in the grammar, blending is not easily recognizable – indeed, invisible from a purely synchronic point of view. Circumstantial evidence is needed to identify the role of blending, as found in grammatical distributions, the timing of changes, semantic relations, or variable probabilities of use. Such evidence indicates that the appearance of the Passival Participle Construction with *want* and later *need* is not or not only the result of analogical extension from the perception verbs to *want* and then to *need*, but is motivated at least in part by a blend of two other constructions, the Passival Gerund Construction and the Object Complement Construction. Similarly, circumstantial evidence points to the role of blending in the development of the Dutch downtoner *allesbehalve*. Here, it is the opportunity of blending between the downtoner and its composing elements that can explain why certain environments initially more strongly favour the downtoner than others.

There are three general points suggested by these findings. First, it is misleading to take the features of the most recognizable blends as diagnostics for the process in general. Some blends are directly identifiable because they violate canonical boundaries and because their input expressions can be easily reconstructed as they overlap in form and coincide in meaning. In neither of the cases studied here are there obvious boundary violations, nor are, in the case of *allesbehalve*, the blended input expressions synonymous. Second, it follows that blending may be more frequent than appears at first sight. The case studies presented here can give no indication of how common covert blending phenomena are, but if it is accepted that they exist, it is possible that the process is common, even if – or precisely because – from a synchronic point of view it may be hard to detect. Third (and more tentatively), it also follows that, in the spirit of Bolinger (1961) or Cohen (1987), syntactic blending is potentially much more than a source of speech errors and sporadic innovations. It may be capable of 'generating' acceptable grammatical structures. This means it can be a legitimate mechanism for coining utterances, just as blending at the conceptual level is a legitimate way of construing the world (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). This possibility is supported by the finding that blending appears to facilitate developments that are expected from a rule-based perspective, such as the distributional changes affecting *allesbehalve*. Anttila (1989: 28) offers the tantalizing suggestion that blending could be regarded as a primitive form of syntax – the first step in the evolution of language towards the systematic recombining of expressions that is syntax. It is suggested here that the rule-based syntactic system that is commonly believed to characterize the current evolutionary stage of human language does not completely supersede the allegedly more primitive means of coining new utterances that is provided by blending.

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Data sources

BNC = *British National Corpus*.
CEMET = *Corpus of Early Modern English texts*.
CEN = *Corpus of English novels*.
CLMETEV = *Corpus of Late Modern English texts* (extended version).
COHA = *Corpus of Historical American English*
KBHK = *Koninklijke Bibliotheek Historische Kranten*
OBC = *Old Bailey Corpus*.
OED = *Oxford English Dictionary*.
PPCEME = *Penn-Helsinki parsed corpus of Early Modern English*.
WNT = *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*

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